

PATENT APPLICATION

HIGH FREQUENCY LOSS OF SIGNAL DETECTOR

Inventor(s): **AFSHIN MOMTAZ**, a citizen of the United States, residing at
4061 Germainder Way
Irvine, CA 92612

PANG-CHENG HSU, a citizen of Taiwan, residing at
4915 Maricopa Street
Torrance, CA 90503

Assignee: **BROADCOM CORPORATION**
16215 Alton Parkway
Irvine, CA 92619-3616

Entity: Large

HIGH FREQUENCY LOSS OF SIGNAL DETECTOR

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[01] The present invention relates in general to integrated circuitry, and in particular
5 to methods and circuits for implementing a high frequency loss of signal detector.

[02] In many telecommunication applications the receiver is required to distinguish
between bad or corrupted data and valid data. Common causes of bad data include
disconnects in the transmission line (e.g., a cut fiber optic cable in an optical network),
10 excessive attenuation of the signal relative to noise or DC offset in the signal path,
clock feed-through, or equipment fault. Bit error rate (BER) which is a direct
indication of the number of errors in received data during a given time period is
commonly used in the industry as a measure of the quality of the received signal. In
some applications BER is measured by sending and receiving a known pattern, while
15 other applications measure BER by a line loop-back test method. In order to
continuously monitor BER of a received signal, receivers use a statistical loss of
signal (SLOS) detector. The SLOS detector measures BER relative to a threshold and
indicates a loss-of-signal condition when BER exceeds the threshold.

[03] In a typical receiver, clock is extracted from the incoming data and is used to
20 retime the incoming signal before further processing the data. BER increases when
the timing relationship between the extracted clock and the incoming data falls outside
the allowed range. For example, the retiming circuitry may require one edge, e.g., the
falling edge, of the clock to occur in the middle of the data eye. If the clock falling
25 edge gets too close to the data transition, an error may occur. Jitter and static phase
offset are the two main contributors to disturbing the required phase relationship and

therefore the increase in BER. Incoming data jitter as well as extracted clock jitter both add to the total jitter, and clock duty cycle distortion as well as clock and data recovery (CDR) and retimer phase offset all add to total static phase offset. The functionality of the SLOS detector can therefore be based on monitoring the phase of the data signal relative to that of the recovered clock signal. A 2.488 Gb/s fiber optic receiver that includes a loss-of-signal detector designed based on this concept is described in "A 2.448 Gb/s Si-bipolar Clock and Data Recovery IC with Robust Loss of Signal Detection," HP Design Conference, Tokyo, 1997, by Walker et al. That implementation, however, relies on a Si-Bipolar process to achieve the required speed of operation for 2.448 Gb/s receiver. The faster Si-Bipolar process and the relatively lower speed of operation relax some of the circuit design constraints. For example, for higher bit rates (e.g., 10 Gb/s or higher) the capacitive loading on the internal data and clock lines becomes far more critical. Because the SLOS circuitry often directly connects to the data input line and the recovered clock line, at higher data rates special care must be taken to minimize the capacitive loading on these lines. It is also desirable to implement the circuit in standard CMOS (complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor) transistor technology which is more cost-effective and has the added advantage of lower power consumption. The CMOS process, however, is a slower process compared to Si-Bipolar or other more complex processes such as SiGe or GaAs. Furthermore, the SLOS signal is often used to immediately initiate remedial action such as rerouting of signal traffic to a redundant cable, or adjusting the phase or threshold levels in certain internal circuitry, and the like. Such remedial actions are often disruptive and have undesirable side-effects. For overall system reliability, therefore, it is desirable that the SLOS detector operate reliably.

[04] There is therefore a need for a loss-of-signal detector that can operate reliably at ultra-high data rates and can be implemented without requiring special processing technologies.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[05] The present invention provides methods and circuitry for implementing high speed loss-of-signal detectors for use in Gb/s telecommunication applications. The invention measures BER by comparing phase of the clock signal extracted from the incoming data with that of a delayed version of the incoming data. The results of this comparison are averaged over time to arrive at the BER. The measured BER is compared to a pre-determined threshold value to detect a loss-of-signal condition. The invention adjusts the amount of delay of the incoming data in such a manner as to minimize the capacitive loading on the data line and clock line introduced by the loss-of-signal circuitry. In one embodiment, a flip-flop latches the recovered clock signal in response to delayed data to determine their timing relationship. In an exemplary implementation, the data is delayed by one quarter of the clock period resulting in a symmetrical window of error on either side of the half-period transition of the clock. This enables the detection of an error on either sides of the half-period using a single flip-flop. According to this embodiment of the invention, therefore, the loss-of-signal detector only adds the capacitive loading of a single flip-flop to the recovered clock line, while it capacitively loads the data line by no more than the delay circuit.

[06] Accordingly, in one embodiment, the present invention provides, in a receiver that includes a clock recovery circuit that extracts a recovered clock signal from an incoming data signal, a loss-of-signal detector including: a delay circuit coupled to receive the incoming data signal and configured to shift a phase of the incoming data signal by a predetermined delay to generate a delayed data signal; a flip-flop coupled to receive the recovered clock signal at one input and the delayed data signal at a clock input; an integrator coupled to an output of the flip-flop; a switch coupled to the integrator and configured to reset the integrator; and a comparator having a first input coupled to an output of the integrator and a second input coupled to a threshold voltage. The delay circuit is configured to shift the phase of the incoming data signal in a manner that is symmetrical with respect to the clock signal half-period. In a

specific embodiment, the predetermined delay is substantially equal to one quarter of the clock signal period.

[07] In another embodiment, the present invention provides a high speed receiver including a clock and data recovery block coupled to receive an incoming data signal and configured to extract a recovered clock signal from the incoming data signal; a retiming circuit coupled to receive the incoming data and the recovered clock signal and configured to generate a retimed data signal for further processing; and a statistical loss-of-signal (SLOS) detector coupled to receive the recovered clock signal and the incoming data signal, and configured to measure a bit error rate of the incoming data signal and to detect a loss-of-signal condition, wherein the SLOS detector is configured such that it adds as capacitive loading a single flip-flop to the recovered clock signal and a delay circuit to the incoming data signal.

[08] In yet another embodiment, the present invention provides, in a receiver that includes a clock recovery circuit that extracts a recovered clock signal from an incoming data signal, a method for detecting statistical loss of signal, the method including: delaying the incoming data signal by one quarter of the recovered clock signal period to generate a delayed data signal; latching the recovered clock signal using the delayed data signal as clock to generate an error signal; integrating error signals over a predetermined period of time to arrive at a bit error rate of the incoming data signal; and comparing the bit error rate with a predetermined threshold to detect a loss-of-signal condition.

[09] The following detailed description and the accompanying drawings will provide a better understanding of the nature and advantages of the high speed statistical loss-of-signal detector according to the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[10] Figure 1 is a simplified block diagram of a receiver including a statistical loss-of-signal detector according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

5

[11] Figure 2 is a timing diagram illustrating the operation of a SLOS detector according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

[12] Figure 3 shows an exemplary implementation for a SLOS detector according to the present invention;

10

[13] Figure 4 shows exemplary transistor-level implementations for high speed delay circuit and flip-flop used in the SLOS detector of the present invention;

15

[14] Figure 5 is a circuit schematic of an exemplary analog integrator for use in the SLOS detector of the present invention; and

[15] Figure 6 shows a transistor-level implementation for an exemplary comparator for use in the SLOS detector of the present invention.

20

[16] The following detailed description uses the same reference numerals to refer to the same blocks and elements that may appear in different figures.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[17] The coming of the modern information age has brought about phenomenal growth in demand for telecommunications-based services and products, driven primarily by the Internet. As the burgeoning expansion of the Internet continues along an unprecedented and unpredictable path, many new applications are foreseen and expected. These applications are placing increasing demands for ultra-high speed circuit solutions. In parallel, driven by the explosive growth in bandwidth requirements of multimedia applications, various ultra-high bit rate transmission techniques have been developed. Fiber-optic communications system speeds have increased from asynchronous-transfer-mode (ATM) rates of 155 Mb/s and synchronous optical network (SONET) rates of 622 Mb/s to the optical carrier (OC) standard of OC-192 at 10 Gb/s and OC-768 at 40 Gb/s. Realizing such high speeds in standard CMOS process technology presents serious challenges to the circuit designer. This speed bottleneck requires that the capacitive loading on the incoming data line and the extracted clock line be minimized. The amount of loading presented by conventional SLOS detector circuitry would be unacceptable in the 10 GHz and above frequency range.

[18] The present invention provides a statistical loss of signal detector that minimizes the capacitive loading on the high speed data and clock lines. In one embodiment, the high-speed portion of SLOS detector according to the present invention includes one flip-flop and one buffer. Referring to Figure 1, there is shown a partial block diagram of a receiver 100 according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. The incoming high speed data DataIn is applied to a clock and data recovery (CDR) block 102. CDR 102 extracts a clock signal CLK from the incoming data DataIn. A retimer block 104 receives the incoming data DataIn and adjusts the phase of DataIn using the extracted clock CLK. A SLOS detector 106 also receives the signals DataIn and CLK and generates signals V_{BER} and SLOS. SLOS detector 106 includes a flip-flop (f/f) 108 that receives CLK at its data input and a

delayed DataIn at its clock input. Signal DataIn is delayed by delay buffer 110. In one embodiment, delay buffer 110 delays data DataIn by one quarter of the CLK period or $\Delta T = T/4$. The output signal Qb of f/f 108 is averaged over time by integrator 112 to generate signal V_{BER} that provides a measure of BER of the received signal. A comparator 114 compares V_{BER} to a threshold voltage V_{TH} to generate signal SLOS. As thus constructed, SLOS circuit 106 loads down the extracted clock CLK by a single f/f, and loads down the incoming data DataIn by a single buffer.

[19] The operation of the SLOS circuit will be described hereinafter in connection with the timing diagram shown in Figure 2 and the exemplary SLOS circuit shown in Figure 3. For illustrative purposes, an exemplary SONET OC-192 application will be assumed wherein the SLOS circuitry receives a 10Gb/s incoming data and a 10 GHz extracted clock signal. It is to be understood, however, that the invention is not limited to any specific telecommunication standard. Referring to Figure 2, the top two waveforms show DataIn and CLK signals. As noted therein, at 10 GHz, the clock period T equals 100 ps. Thus, in the exemplary embodiment where buffer 110 delays DataIn by T/4, the delay would be 25 ps. Referring to Figure 3, f/f 108 latches the 10GHz extracted clock signal CLK using the delayed data (signal DataIn_Delayed in Figure 2). An error count occurs when an edge of the incoming data drifts past the allowed window ΔT on either sides of the falling edge of CLK (when CLK falling edge is used to sample the data eye). That is, the SLOS circuitry needs to detect for both conditions $(T/2) \pm \Delta T$. Denoting the phase relationship between CLK and DataIn by τ_{D2C} , the output of f/f 108, Qb, would depend on τ_{D2C} . If τ_{D2C} is less than T/4 or larger than 3T/4, then Qb would be, e.g., high, otherwise it would be low as shown in Figure 2. Figure 2 illustrates all three cases; when τ_{D2C} is greater than T/4 ($\tau_{D2C} > T/4$; no error detected), when τ_{D2C} is larger than 3T/4 ($\tau_{D2C} > 3T/4$; error detected), and when τ_{D2C} is smaller than T/4 ($\tau_{D2C} < T/4$; error detected).

[20] Referring to the example shown in Figure 2, τ_{D2C} is defined by the time duration between a transition in DataIn and the next falling edge of CLK. The first transition on DataIn_Delayed at time t1 that clocks f/f 108 occurs at about the middle of the positive half-cycle of CLK. In this instance, the relationship $\tau_{D2C} > T/4$ clearly holds resulting in Qb being low (Qb is the complementary output of f/f 108). The same is true for the next transition of DataIn_Delayed at time t2 when f/f 108 latches a high value presented by CLK, resulting in Qb being low. Referring now to Figure 3, there is shown an exemplary implementation for integrator 112 in greater detail. Integrator 112 includes a switch S1 that when closed connects a current source I_0 to a capacitor C. The top plate of capacitor C provides the signal V_{BER} and connects to one input of comparator 114. Accordingly, as long as Qb remains low, switch S1 is remains open and capacitor C remains discharged, maintaining a low state for V_{BER} .

[21] The next transition of signal DataIn_Delayed occurs at time t3 earlier than expected due to, e.g., jitter. As shown in Figure 2, this causes τ_{D2C} to be greater than $3T/4$ such that a low state of CLK (at t3) is latched by f/f 108. Thus Qb goes high closing switch S1 and allowing current source I_0 to charge up capacitor C. Therefore, at time t3, Qb signals an error and V_{BER} starts to rise. The following transition of DataIn_Delayed occurs later than expected at time t4. In this instance τ_{D2C} is smaller than $T/4$ as shown in Figure 2. A low state of CLK (at t4) is latched by f/f 108 keeping Qb high and switch S1 closed. Current source I_0 continues to charge capacitor C. Thus, another error is detected resulting in further increase in the level of V_{BER} . Accordingly, in this embodiment, a delay of $T/4$ allows for examining both criteria $\tau_{D2C} < T/4$ and $\tau_{D2C} > 3T/4$ with one flip-flop. This minimizes the capacitive loading on the high-speed signal path. The present invention thus selects a ΔT such that it results in a symmetrical window around the sampling edge of CLK and is therefore able to detect both conditions $(T/2) \pm \Delta T$ with a single flip-flop.

[22] Returning to the operation of the SLOS circuit, each time Q_b goes high, current source I_0 charges up capacitor C and voltage V_{BER} increases. When Q_b is low, however, capacitor C maintains its charge and V_{BER} stays constant. A second switch $S2$ connecting in parallel to capacitor C resets the integrator after a predetermined amount of time τ_{int} . The value of the integration period τ_{int} is dictated primarily by the target BER, and may be generated by a divider circuit 302 that divides down the clock signal CLK to arrive at the target period (e.g., 50 μs). Comparator 114 compares V_{BER} to a predetermined threshold voltage and generates the signal SLOS. In one embodiment, comparator 114 has a built-in hysteresis which requires V_{BER} to exceed a first threshold V_{t1} to signal a loss-of-signal condition (e.g., SLOS = high), and then to drop below a second threshold V_{t2} that is smaller than V_{t1} before SLOS goes low again. This will allow the circuit to signal an alarm when the BER reaches, e.g., 10^{-3} (one error in 1 kilo bits of data), and to not release the alarm until BER drops to 10^{-4} (one error in 10 kilo bits of data). The values of V_{t1} and V_{t2} are determined by the size of ΔT (e.g., $T/3$ or $T/4$), the set-up and hold time of retimer circuitry (Figure 1), and the expected noise shape (e.g., Gaussian). In an exemplary embodiment, V_{t1} is set at approximately 800 mV and V_{t2} is set at approximately 600 mV. A specific exemplary implementation for comparator 114 will be further described below in connection with Figure 6.

[23] As incoming data noise increases (BER increases), the number of times that τ_{D2C} falls outside of $(T/2) \pm \Delta T$ increases. As a result, capacitor C is charged more often and V_{BER} increases. The slope of this relationship between BER and V_{BER} can be adjusted by changing the value of C , or alternatively by changing the amount of current supplied by current source I_0 . In one embodiment capacitor C is provided external to the chip, allowing the user to increase the value of C which would lead to smaller V_{BER} , and hence, a higher BER required to trigger SLOS. The value of C can be adjusted by the user to match an expected noise shape as well.

[24] It is desirable to implement the SLOS circuitry in standard CMOS process technology. Referring to Figure 4, there is shown an exemplary circuit implementation for delay buffer 110 and flip-flop 108 using standard CMOS process technology. To achieve the higher speed of operation, this exemplary embodiment uses a circuit technique based on current-steering referred to as current-controlled CMOS or C³MOS™ logic. Buffer 110 is implemented by a differential pair that steers current in one of two branches in response to the differential signal at its inputs. Flip-flop 108 is constructed in an analogous manner. These circuits operate much faster as they need not incur the delay caused by turning transistors on and off to signal a logic state, and instead steer current from one branch to another. There is a power penalty since the circuit draws steady-state current. However, it is capable of realizing speeds that would otherwise not be achievable by standard CMOS logic. A more detailed description of various circuit blocks implemented in C³MOS logic including buffers, flip-flops and other logic circuits is provided in commonly-assigned patent application number 09/484,856, entitled "Current-Controlled CMOS Logic Family," by A. Hairapetian, which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[25] Figure 5 provides an exemplary transistor-level circuit diagram for integrator 112 using standard CMOS process technology. While a single transistor can be used to implement switch S1, according to this embodiment of the invention, a faster differential implementation is preferred. Switch S1 is implemented by a pair of transistors M1 and M2. In this embodiment, transistors M1 and M2 are p-channel transistors. It is to be understood, however, that this circuit can be implemented with transistors having the opposite polarity. The gate terminals of transistors M1 and M2 receive the output of the flip-flop (f/f 108 in Figure 1) and its complement. Transistor M3 receives a bias voltage at its gate from bias circuit 502 and supplies current to transistors M1 and M2. Therefore, at any given time, one of the transistors M1 or M2 is conducting current depending on the logic state applied to the inputs INN and INP. Since the current source need not turn on and off, this differential implementation realizes a higher speed switching operation. Transistor M2 connects to capacitor C

while transistor M1 connects to a dummy capacitor C'. A unity gain buffer amplifier 504 connects between the two branches of the differential switch to maintain the voltage at the two nodes as close together as possible. This maximizes the switching speed of the circuit. It is to be understood that the specific implementation shown in Figure 5 is for illustrative purposes and that other implementations are possible. For example, instead of using an analog integrator of the type shown in Figure 5, the SLOS circuitry of the present invention may use a digital integrator where, for example, a counter counts the number of times Qb is asserted.

[26] A number of different implementations are possible for comparator 114. Figure 6 shows one exemplary implementation. In this example, the two threshold voltages Vt1 and Vt2 are set by a resistive divider chain 602. A first conventional comparator 604 receives Vt1 at its positive input and V_{BER} at its negative input (IN). A second conventional comparator 606 receives Vt2 at its positive input and V_{BER} at its negative input. Comparators 604 and 606 need not have special high speed implementation since this part of the circuit operates at lower speed. Well known comparator circuitry can be used to implement comparators 604 and 606. The output of comparators 604 and 606 respectively connect to inputs of a set-reset latch 608. Set-reset latch 608 is implemented by a pair of cross-coupled NOR gates as shown. Other types of compare circuitry with built-in hysteresis will be known to those skilled in this art.

[27] In conclusion, the present invention provides methods and circuitry for implementing a high speed statistical loss-of-signal detector. The invention minimizes the amount of capacitive loading the SLOS circuitry introduces on high speed signal lines of a receiver. In specific embodiments, the invention provides high speed SLOS circuitry using standard CMOS technology. It is to be understood that the specific embodiments described above are for illustrative purposes only, and that various modifications, alternative implementations and equivalents are possible. For

while transistor M1 connects to a dummy capacitor C'. A unity gain buffer amplifier 504 connects between the two branches of the differential switch to maintain the voltage at the two nodes as close together as possible. This maximizes the switching speed of the circuit. It is to be understood that the specific implementation shown in Figure 5 is for illustrative purposes and that other implementations are possible. For example, instead of using an analog integrator of the type shown in Figure 5, the SLOS circuitry of the present invention may use a digital integrator where, for example, a counter counts the number of times Qb is asserted.

[26] A number of different implementations are possible for comparator 114. Figure 6 shows one exemplary implementation. In this example, the two threshold voltages Vt1 and Vt2 are set by a resistive divider chain 602. A first conventional comparator 604 receives Vt1 at its positive input and V_{BER} at its negative input (IN). A second conventional comparator 606 receives Vt2 at its positive input and V_{BER} at its negative input. Comparators 604 and 606 need not have special high speed implementation since this part of the circuit operates at lower speed. Well known comparator circuitry can be used to implement comparators 604 and 606. The output of comparators 604 and 606 respectively connect to inputs of a set-reset latch 608. Set-reset latch 608 is implemented by a pair of cross-coupled NOR gates as shown. Other types of compare circuitry with built-in hysteresis will be known to those skilled in this art.

[27] In conclusion, the present invention provides methods and circuitry for implementing a high speed statistical loss-of-signal detector. The invention minimizes the amount of capacitive loading the SLOS circuitry introduces on high speed signal lines of a receiver. In specific embodiments, the invention provides high speed SLOS circuitry using standard CMOS technology. It is to be understood that the specific embodiments described above are for illustrative purposes only, and that various modifications, alternative implementations and equivalents are possible. For

example, integration duration t_{int} , as well as specific voltage levels V_{t1} and V_{t2} may vary depending on the application requirements such as target BER, noise distribution, etc. Similarly, specific transistor-level implementations are intended for illustrative purposes only and are not limiting. The scope of the invention should therefore not be

5 limited by the embodiment described above, and should instead be determined by the following claims and their full breadth of equivalents.